

Nixon Offers India 'Serious' Dialogue on Relations

Overture to India

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 9 —

President Nixon offered India today the prospect of a "serious" dialogue on improved relations—provided she remained nonaligned and independent.

At the same time Mr. Nixon emphasized that Pakistan remained a close friend whose well-being and security were still of concern to the United States. The United States, he said in his State of the World Message, stands ready to help in rebuilding the society and economy of a shattered state.

"If India has an interest in maintaining balanced relationships with all major powers," Mr. Nixon declared, "we are prepared to respond constructively." He added, "Of interest to us also will be the posture that South Asia's most powerful country now adopts toward its neighbors on the subcontinent."

In a 4,500-word section on South Asia, Mr. Nixon conceded that his Administration had not succeeded in preventing war between India and Pakistan or in encouraging a political solution to their differences.

As he and his advisers have repeatedly done in recent weeks, Mr. Nixon asserted that India was primarily to blame for the outbreak of hostilities Dec. 3 and that during the week of Dec. 6 the United States had convincing evidence that India planned to destroy Pakistan's armed forces and to seize the Pakistani-occupied part of Kashmir.

Mr. Nixon maintained that the Soviet Union had sought "political gain" — presumably enhanced influence throughout the subcontinent—by backing India. The United States, he intimated, had no alternative but to try to rally international opinion to halt the war because "the complete disintegration by force of a member state was intolerable and could not be acquiesced in by the United Nations."

The war, however, ended with an Indian victory, he said, while United States efforts to rally United Nations support for a cease-fire remained stymied by Soviet vetoes.

Henry A. Kissinger, Presidential assistant for national security affairs, refused during a press briefing at the White House today to cite the convincing evidence that influ-

enced United States policy. He said that the public would have to "take it on faith" that the Administration had not acted capriciously.

Nonetheless, during the India-Pakistani war Mr. Kissinger is known to have shown selected newsmen here highly classified Central Intelligence Agency reports from a clandestine source in the Indian Cabinet. The reports are said to have disclosed Indian plans to drive west, to seize Pakistani-occupied Kashmir and to crush Pakistan's armed forces once fighting in the east had ceased.

The Administration's irregular action in disclosing secret material and its source came after widespread criticism of President Nixon's dispatch of a Seventh Fleet task force into the Bay of Bengal at the height of the war. This move—widely interpreted as a warning both to India and the Soviet Union—severely strained United States-Indian relations.

"It would have been dangerous to world peace," Mr. Nixon asserted in his message, "if our efforts to promote a detente between the superpowers were interpreted as an opportunity for the strategic expansion of Soviet power."

For the first time Mr. Nixon publicly linked his actions in the Indian-Pakistani war to China. China's attitude toward the global system, he said "was certain to be profoundly influenced by its assessment of the principles by which this system

was governed—whether force and threat ruled or whether restraint was the international standard."

Mr. Nixon is due to arrive in Peking Feb. 21 for a week of discussions with Chairman Mao Tse-tung, Premier Chou En-lai and other Chinese leaders. It was noted that whereas the Soviet Union was often criticized, the message contained little that could be construed as hostile to China or even critical of her.

The section on South Asia was substantially devoted to a defense of the Administration's support of Pakistan since the crisis arose, but it also contained the sharpest public criticism of the Pakistani Army by any senior Administration official.

"As the army's campaign advanced in East Pakistan through spring and summer of 1971," Mr. Nixon said, countless thousands were killed, civil administration crumbled, famine threatened and millions left their homes and fled to India."

Other points in the section included:

¶ The United States "did not support or condone" the Pakistani Army's crackdown in East Pakistan that began on March 25 last year. Nonetheless it allowed nearly \$5-million in munitions to pass to Pakistan before the "pipeline" dried up completely in early November, eight months later.

¶ The United States committed \$91-million through the

United Nations for refugee relief in India and \$158-million through the United Nations and directly for the population of East Pakistan. Mr. Nixon described the relief program as an effort to gain time for "quiet diplomacy."

¶ The Soviet Union supplied India with \$730-million in arms after the 1965 United States embargo on arms to India and Pakistan. This compared with \$143-million supplied to Pakistan by China.

¶ Since the 1965 embargo, United States military deliveries to India and Pakistan totaled \$70-million and were restricted to "nonlethal" equipment, plus spare parts for equipment previously supplied.

Mr. Nixon's figures appeared to conflict sharply with those recently submitted to Congress by its fiscal watchdog, the General Accounting Office. A study of United States arms deliveries and sales to Pakistan submitted last week to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, showed that arms sales and military assistance to Pakistan alone since 1965 had exceeded \$113-million.

"Some of the items exported were lethal," the study said.

A White House spokesman explained that the \$70-million referred to munitions deliveries whereas the \$113-million cited in the report by the General Accounting office was a "program" figure that included training and other assistance to the Pakistani armed forces.